

## DEFINITIONS

ABANDONED APPLICATION/NOTICE OF ABANDONMENT: An application for which the applicant has decided not to further prosecute the application. An official notice of abandonment is mailed 120 days after failure to respond to the office action.

ABOLISHED CLASSIFICATIONS: A grouping or set of classifications within the Patent and Trademark Office's (PTO) subject matter numerical classifications which has been deleted. During a Reclassification Project, the abolished classifications are replaced by another newly defined set of subject matter classifications.

ABSTRACT: A short narrative summary of the technical disclosure of a patent. An English-language abstract usually is attached to the front of a foreign patent .

ACCEPTABLE COPY: A patent copy which contains all pages, figures, claims, and identifying data and which otherwise meets the established standards.

ALIEN PROPERTY CUSTODIAN PUBLICATION (APC): An application vested in the Alien Property Custodian during World War II which was published in 1943 even though it did not become a patent. Such a document is identified by the words "Alien Property Custodian" and is considered to be non-patent literature.

ALPHA SUBCLASS (Unofficial Subclass): A subclass which is an examiner-initiated unofficial further breakdown of an official classification. An alpha subclass is identified by a subclass number with an alpha suffix appended. Although no definition is available for and alpha subclasses (hence the term "unofficial"), it is recorded on the Subclass Data File.

APPLICATION FILE (File Wrapper): Colored legal-size folder containing official papers designated for that file. This file contains all documents relative to the examination/prosecution of the application..

Design application -- An application for an invention of a new, original and ornamental design for an article of manufacture. The current file wrapper for a Design application is Lavender in color and the current serial number series begins with 29.

Utility application -- An application for an invention for any new and useful improvement of a process, machine manufacture, or composition of matter. The file wrapper for a Utility application currently is green and/or yellow and green and the serial number series begins with 08 or 09 (use of the 09 series began Jan 1998).

Provisional application – A written document which consists of a specification, drawings (if applicable) and the fee required by law.. A provisional application is not examined and is considered abandoned 12 months after the filing date. The current file wrapper for a provisional application is blue and white and the serial number series currently begins with 60.

Reissue – An application for a patent to take the place of an unexpired patent that is defective in one or more particulars. The current file wrapper for a reissue application is white with orange stripes. A reissue application uses the same label type and serial number series as parent application.

Plant application – An application for a patent for the invention or discovery and asexual reproduction of any distinct and new variety of plant. A plant application uses the same file wrapper and serial number series as a utility application.

ART: A generic term for areas of technology. The term is also used for the actual patents and literature concerning such technology.

ART UNIT: A division within an Examining Group. (See Examining Group.)

BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA: Information related to a patent application that includes the inventor name, address, and citizenship; attorney's name, address, and phone number; assignee's name, address and phone number; title of the invention; and filing date. This data is entered into PALM and/or PACE and is used in the mailing of office actions and printed on the face of issuing patents

BAD COPY: A patent which is incomplete, illegible, or otherwise not acceptable in accordance with established standards.

CANCELED PATENT COPY: A cross-reference patent within a reclassification project whose classification has been abolished and no new classification established.

CENTRAL FILES: The location(s) in each Technology Center where all pending applications files are stored. The application files are maintained in numeric sequence by serial number.

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION (CofC): A certificate issued by the PTO as a result of a mistake in a patent. A printed copy of the certificate is attached to the patent copy(ies) and is considered part of the original patent.

CLAIM (s): Statement(s) at the end of the specification of a patent application that particularly points out the distinctly claimed subject matter which the applicant regards as his/her invention.

CLASS: A major grouping of subject matter or functional categories designated by a numeric code and a title. There are over 420 classes, each of which is further divided into approximately 152,539 subclasses

CLASSIFICATION: (1) The science of systematically arranging the prior art documents (e.g., U.S. patents, foreign patents, and non-patent literature) into a system of numerical categories called classes and subclasses in such a manner as to facilitate the search for and retrieval of specific technical information disclosed in the prior art documents; (2) the class and subclass assigned to a document.

CLASSIFICATION LABEL: A printed label which is attached or intended to be attached to a patent copy and which contains all pertinent information for patent identification and search file location (e.g., patent number, class/subclass, and/or date of publication).

CLASSIFICATION ORDER: Official published notification of specific changes in the official set of classifications. The order details the reclassification action that has taken place by identifying the classifications abolished and established and provides a new set of definitions for the established classifications. The order also contains all pertinent information which permits users to understand what has taken place and who did the reclassification.

CLASSIFIER: The person who practices the science of classification of patented subject matter.

CONTRACTING OFFICER'S TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE (COTR): The individual within the PTO responsible for the technical aspects of the contract and technical liaison with the Contractor. The COTR also is responsible for the final inspection and acceptance of all the work required under the contract.

COUNT MONDAY: Commonly used term which refers to the Monday following the end of a biweek. "Count Monday" is the last day on which information can be entered into PALM to give an examiner credit for work performed during the previous biweek.

COVER WORKSHEET (Coversheet): A sheet of paper attached to, or intended to be attached to, a designated portion of a patent and which contains classification information about the patent. A coversheet for each patent is marked by a classifier to indicate a change in classification pursuant to a reclassification project.

CONTINUED PROSECUTION APPLICATION (CPA): A continuation is a second application for the same invention claimed in a prior nonprovisional application and filed before the original application becomes abandoned or patented. The applicant in the continuation application must include at least one inventor named in the prior nonprovisional application.

CROSS REFERENCE (XR): All classifications assigned to a patent other than the classification designated as the Original (OR).

CYCLE TIME: The amount of time between the filing of an application and the disposal of the application when the processing time is charged to the PTO.

DEFENSIVE PUBLICATION: An abstract of a patent application published by the PTO and placed in the Search Files as prior art. The person holding the pending patent application must first file a written waiver of his/her rights to a patent and open the patent application to inspection by the public, thereby making the entire application part of the prior art. The intent of a Defensive Publication is to preclude anyone from subsequently patenting the subject matter of the application. These documents have been given a separate series of number preceded by "T;" e.g., T123,456. Defensive Publications were replaced by SIR documents in 1986.

DESIGN APPLICATION: see Application File

DIGEST: A collection of cross-reference patent copies in a subclass identified by the class number and the letters "DIG" followed by up to three numbers. There are no "OR" patents located in this type of subclass. This term also refers to a patent which has some pages removed at the direction of the Examiner and which has been stamped "DIGEST."

DISPOSAL: Equivalent to an allowance, abandonment, examiner's answer, international preliminary examination report, SIR disposal after first action on merit, or interference when application is in condition for allowance except for interference. At the PTO office level, refers only to an allowance or abandonment.

DOUBLE MISSING: A patent copy missing from both the Examiner Search File and Public Search File (ESF and PSF) in File Integrity processing.

DUPLICATE PATENT COPY: A patent copy which has the same patent number and classification as another patent in a reclassification project.

ESTABLISHED CLASS: Newly created or redefined technology resulting from the professional review of an existing classification.

EXAMINER (Patent Examiner): An individual whose function is to examine U.S. patent applications to determine patentability based on a review of the prior art.

EXAMINING CORPS: That organization within the PTO which is charged with the examination of patent applications. The Corps is organized into six Technology Centers, each responsible for like technologies. Each Technology Center further divides into multiple Work Groups consisting of several Art Units. A Technology Center is managed by several Group Directors; each Art Unit is headed by a Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE). Each Center also

includes a Technical Support Staff (TSS) headed by Supervisory Legal Instrument Examiners (SLIE).

EXAMINER SEARCH FILE (ESF): A complete paper set of the classified file of U.S. patents, foreign patents, and non-patent literature which is located in the patent examining groups. Each examining group has multiple search rooms which house pertinent portions of the search file. The ESF may also be referred to as the "Examiner Set."

EXTERNAL CROSS REFERENCE: A cross-reference patent whose original classification is outside the scope of a reclassification project. This patent copy is considered a "preferred patent copy" for which a patent cover worksheet is generated and attached to the patent copy prior to forwarding the patent copy to the Classifier for professional review.

FLAT WORK: Commonly use term which refers to application-related documents which are submitted subsequent to the filing of an application.

FOREIGN PATENTS: Patents and published patent applications printed by foreign countries. Copies of these documents are located in the Examiner Search File only and are used as reference material by the patent examiners and the public. Each foreign language document has an English-language abstract attached to it.

FOUND PATENT COPY: A patent copy which is not of record in the classification where it is found. The classification label affixed to the patent copy indicates it belongs in that classification but there is no computer record (label, cover worksheet, computer-generated listing) indicating that it belongs in that classification.

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE: An individual appointed by the Government to serve as a representative for the Government in the administration of the contract.

HOUSEKEEPING: Any physical maintenance of the facilities such as relabeling racks, mini-expansions of search files, compressing files in central files, etc.

IN HOUSE: A term used to describe those functions or activities which are performed within the PTO by Government employees.

INCOMPLETE COPY: A patent copy which has figures or textual material missing or illegible.

INFORMAL TRANSFER: A patent on which someone, presumably an Examiner, has manually marked through the class and/or subclass on the patent copy and substituted a different class and/or subclass and then refiled the patent according to the substitute classification.

INTERNAL CROSS REFERENCE: A cross reference patent within a reclassification project whose original classification also is within the project. These patent copies are removed as surplus during Preprocessing because the OR patent will be sent to the Classifier. These patent copies are stored (by the contractor) for use as an additional copy as needed during Final Processing.

INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC): A subject matter classification system similar to that of the U.S. which is used by many foreign countries and sometimes used in the Examiner Search File for filing foreign patent documents.

JUMBO PATENT COPY: A patent copy having more than 40 pages.

LABELING: The act of physically attaching a printed classification label to a patent copy in a specified manner.

LISTING: A computer-generated list of information.

LIST PROJECT: A reclassification project whose new classification data is marked on and keyed from a list rather than the cover worksheets or patents themselves.

MANUAL OF CLASSIFICATION (Class Manual): The document (paper or electronic) containing the classification schedules which list the number and descriptive titles of the more than 420 classes and 130,000 subclasses used in the subject classification of patents.

MANUAL SEQUENCE: Subclass numbering as contained in the Manual of Classification; may not be numeric sequence (e.g., Class 36, subclasses 138, 139, 2.6, 3, 5.1, 7.7, 7.3).

MASTER CLASSIFICATION FILE (MCF): The automated data base which contains each U.S. patent number and its corresponding classification(s).

MINI-FILE EXPANSION: A file expansion done as part of routine Examiner Search Room Maintenance. A mini-file expansion automatically is initiated by the contractor when sufficient space for a file expansion exists within three shoecase columns of an area requiring expansion.

MISFILE PATENT: A patent copy which is found in a classification or search file location which is not the classification or search file location indicated on the label of that patent copy.

MISSING PATENT: A patent for which there is no copy in the search file being processed. A copy of each missing patent must be obtained. Does not include additional copies which can be photocopied from a copy in hand in a reclassification or file integrity project or obtained from the stored surplus.

NOTICE OF AUTHORITY (NOA): A written authorization permitting the Contractor to initiate work.

NUMERIC CLASSIFICATIONS: Official classifications in the file of classified patents (i.e., search file) which contain only numeric symbols as classification indicia.

OATH: Statement that applicant believes himself/herself to be the original and first inventor for which he/she solicits a patent. A statement of citizenship also must be included in the oath.

OFFICE ACTION: Any official communication from the Patent Office to patent applicants or their representatives.

ORIGINAL REFERENCE (OR): The classification for each patent pertaining to the most comprehensive claimed subject matter of that patent. A patent can have only one OR classification.

PATENT APPLICATION CORRECTION ENTRY SYSTEM (PACE): Automated system used to enter bibliographic data.

PATENT APPLICATION LOCATING AND MONITORING (PALM): Automated system which maintains a record on each patent application and the physical location of the application. Each PALM workstation is composed of a CRT screen, a keyboard, and a printer. PALM transactions (e.g., changing location, printing information) normally are performed by "wandering" (i.e., optically scanning) a bar code printed on an application file and/or keying in additional data. PALM also is available using a PC connected to PTO's Network.

PAPER MATCHING: Taking incoming papers (faxes and mail), locating the related application files, placing the papers in the related application files and delivering them to the Technical Support Staff for entry. (Synonymous with file retrieval)

PATENT: A grant of certain rights to an individual inventor by the Government acting through the PTO. The subject matter of the patent is an invention. The right conferred by the patent grant is for a limited time period and allows the patent owner to exclude others from making, using, or selling the invention in this country. There are several types of patents:

DESIGN: Patents for ornamental designs which are issued under a separate series of numbers preceded by "D;" e.g., D140,000.

PLANT: Patents for asexually reproduced varieties of plants which are issued under a separate series of numbers preceded by "PP;" e.g., PP13.

REISSUE: Patents which correct errors in a previously granted parent patent. Reissue patents do not extend the period of patent coverage since they expire when the

previously granted patent expires. Reissues are issued under a separate series of numbers preceded by "RE;" e.g., RE229,106.

X-SERIES: These are the approximately 10,000 patents issued between 1790 and July 1836. They were not originally numbered but have been assigned numbers in the sequence in which they were issued..

UTILITY: The mechanical, electrical, and chemical patents granted since 1836. This series comprises the bulk of all U.S. patents. Utility patents are issued under a series of numbers now including seven digits; e.g., 4,517,367.

A.I. SERIES: Patents issued from 1838 to 1861 covering an inventor's improvement on his/her own patented device. These patents were given a separate series of numbers preceded by "A.I." to indicate Additional Improvement; e.g., A.I.113. Approximately 300 such patents were issued.

PATENT COPY: The document which is a facsimile of the patent and which is placed in the search file in the PTO. The official patent is a grant issued to the inventor and is in the possession of the inventor or his/her assignee.

PCT: Patent Cooperation Treaty. Also refers to an organization within the PTO.

PRIOR ART: The collection of U.S. patents, foreign patents, and non-patent literature which constitutes the documents disclosing technical information which are reviewed during the patent application examination process.

PROBLEM OR: A patent copy which has no original classification or more than one original classification.

PROJECT SCOPE: The classification or series of classifications included in a reclassification or file integrity project.

PROJECT TRANSFER: A patent copy within one project which is to be transferred to a second project.

PROVISIONAL APPLICATION: see Application File.

PTO: An acronym which refers to the Patent and Trademark Office, an agency within the Department of Commerce.

PTO-666 (Shoe Label): A PTO standard form which is used on each shoe in the Examiner Search File to identify the document type, class/subclass, and patent number range of patent documents filed within the shoe.



PUBLIC SEARCH FILE (PSF): A complete set of the classified file of U.S. patents which is located in the Public Search Room (PSR) on the first floor of Crystal Plaza (CP) 34 and the mezzanine directly above and is available for search by the general public. The PSF may also be referred to as the “Public Set.”

RACK: An upright, doorless cabinet having accessible horizontal storage compartments, each of which can hold a few inches of U.S. patents. The Public Search File is kept in racks in the Public Search Room. A special rack mounted on wheels is called a truck since it can be used for transportation as well as storage of prior art documents. Racks also are used to house application files.

RECEIPT OF MATERIALS: A written verification issued by the Government and signed by the Contractor acknowledging receipt of specified materials from the Government.

RECLASSIFICATION: The professional science of reorganizing the technological grouping(s) of the prior art documents (i.e., U.S. patents, foreign patents, and non-patent literature). Reclassification is necessitated by the growth and development of technology and new relationships and interactions between and among technologies. The purpose of reclassification is to facilitate the retrieval of specific technical information disclosed in the prior art.

RECLASSIFICATION PROJECT: A particular group of classifications which have been selected for reclassification. The project may include one or more classes, subclasses, or any combination thereof.

REEXAMINATION: An examination of a previously issued patent in view of prior art patents or printed publications which results in confirmation or cancellation of one or more patent claims.

REFERENCE COPY: Any document (e.g., U.S. patent) that has been copied for mailing with an office action.

REISSUE APPLICATION: see Application File

RESPONSIVE PAPER: Any amendment filed by the applicant that changes the content of the application or any request by applicant for reconsideration of the examiner’s position.

REVENUE ACCOUNTING and MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (RAM): Provides for the automated support and controls for processing all fees collected for products and services provided by the PTO.

SERIAL NUMBER: Sequential number assigned to application files by the PTO for identification purposes. Beginning January 1998 , the current series of utility application numbers begins with 09/.

SOFT COPY: A patent copy printed on less than 28 pound paper.

SHOE: A term applied to a removable storage drawer in which documents maintained in the Examiner Search File are kept. These drawers or shoes are arranged in doorless cabinets called shoeboxes and are individually labeled to indicate the classification and patent number range of documents contained within each shoe.

SHOECASE: An upright, doorless cabinet holding removable storage drawers called shoes, each of which can hold a few inches of prior art documents.

STATUTORY INVENTION REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS (SIR): SIR documents are published without the formal examination required for a utility patent. A SIR document is designated by a registration number preceded by the letter "H". These documents replaced Defensive Publications in 1986.

STAFF DAY: The unit of measurement used to determine the volume of work to be completed in 1 workday by 1 employee.

SUBCLASS: The smallest segment breakdown of the PTO's official numeric subject matter classification system.

SUBCLASS DATA FILE (SDF): An automated data file of U.S. classification information containing the numeric and/or alpha subclass designator for each and every valid, existing classification as well as the Examiner Search Room location for each.

SUPERVISORY LEGAL INSTRUMENT EXAMINER (SLIE): A support staff supervisor in a Patent Examining Group responsible for all activities and work output of the support staff within an Examining Group.

SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER (SPE): A patent examiner assigned supervisory and training responsibility for an Art Unit of patent examiners. This individual is assigned responsibility for on-the-job training of new patent examiners and for monitoring the patent examination process and the productivity level of the Art Unit.

SURPLUS PATENT: An additional cross-reference patent copy which is removed from the search file during the Preprocessing phase of a reclassification project. Since only the unique copy of each patent in the project is processed and delivered to the classifier, all other copies are removed as surplus and stored for later use.

TECHNOLOGY CENTER: see Examining Corp.

UNIQUE PATENT COPY: In a Reclassification Project, only one copy of each patent having a unique patent number and contained in the project is sent to the Classifier. This patent copy, whether it contains an "OR" or "XR" designation, is considered the unique patent copy for the project. Any extra copies are removed as surplus and stored for later use.

UTILITY APPLICATION: see Application file.

VALIDATE: The process of checking for errors which may exist in the data file.

WORK GROUP: A group of approximately 4 to 9 Art Units headed by a Group Director.

WORKING NUMBER: An identifying code consisting of four numeric digits followed by an alpha character (e.g., 4162A) which is assigned to a proposed subclass created during a reclassification project. The working number is translated into a final subclass number which reflects the subclass position within the new classification schedule.